Faith and Science

Originally By Patriarch Josyf Slipyj, 1935
Originally edited by Fr. Evhen Nebesniak
Illustrations by Bohdan Mazurik
Published by the Salesian Fathers, Rome, 1990
Modern translation and edit by J.C. Lysos, 2026

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Biographical Note

1892: Born on February 17 in the village of Zazdrist, Terebovlia District.

1917: Ordained a priest by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky in Univ on September 30.

1925: Rector of the Lviv Seminary.

1929: Rector of the Theological Academy in Lviv.

1939:

September: Exarch of Western Ukraine.

December: Archbishop-Coadjutor to Metropolitan A. Sheptytsky.

1944: Upon the death of Metropolitan Andrey, becomes Head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

1945: Arrested on April 11.

1946: First sentence—8 years of hard labor in Siberia for "anti-Soviet activities."

1953: Second sentence—7 years for "continuing to exercise his archpastoral rights and functions."

1958: Third sentence—4 years.

1962: Fourth sentence—life imprisonment in Mordovia, Siberia.

1963:

January 26: Released.

February 9: Arrives in Rome.

1965: Elevated to the College of Cardinals by Pope Paul VI.

1984: Dies on September 7.

Preface

Today, a freer spirit prevails in Ukraine. After seventy years of darkness, our people have awakened and seek to soar beneath open skies. Instead of deceptive slogans, they wish to hear words of truth and walk the path of luminous reality. They strive to discern what is truly false and what is life-giving truth. From the youngest, uneducated child to the most seasoned scholar, all sense that something is changing—even if the long-awaited perestroika advances with the slowness of a tortoise, struggling at all costs to penetrate every layer of society and every facet of life.

The scientific sphere is no exception. Here, too, a breath of genuine freshness is felt. During my recent stay in Lviv, especially among students and representatives of the academic world, I repeatedly heard the same refrain: "Send us books in which we can find the truth about our land!"

For seventy years, the entire educational and scientific community in the Soviet Union—not just in Ukraine—was inspired by Marxist ideology, to which all science was subjugated, constrained, and placed in the service of the Party and Bolshevik directives. Stalin brutalized science, while Hitler imposed his own imperatives. Falsehood reigned in scholarship and research; slander and defamation were rampant. Ukrainian history and literature were falsified—in short, all creative and intellectual achievements were forced to serve an inhuman regime. Anything that revealed the brilliance and ingenuity of the Ukrainian mind and spirit, anything that sought to define its identity, had to be ruthlessly suppressed.

The most vicious attacks came from Stalin's followers and admirers, who targeted the Church—the visible embodiment of all that is dear to the Ukrainian heart, the last bastion of Ukrainian identity. They declared: "The Church restricts the freedom of science! Faith enslaves the sciences of technology, mathematics, and geography! The Church clings only to old ideas and hinders the development of new thought!" In short, they claimed that only atheists, godless men, and blasphemers could be true scientists; that faith contradicts science; that there can be no relationship between faith and science; that faith undermines all scientific achievements, and so on. They insisted that the Church is inherently opposed to any progress in science.

In 1935, the late Patriarch Josyf responded to these baseless accusations with his article "Faith and Science," published that same year in the monthly journal Dzvony (Issue 12) and later reprinted in 1969 in Rome (pp. 125–148, Works of Kyr Josyf, Supreme Archbishop and Cardinal, Volume II, published by the Ukrainian Catholic University of St. Clement Pope). With scholarly precision, he demonstrated that there is no inherent contradiction between faith and science. The Church teaches those truths and dogmas that Christ revealed and entrusted to Her. The sciences, for their part, employ their own methods, and there are disciplines—such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry—that do not fall within the domain of faith. The Church will never deny that 2 + 2 = 4 or similar truths; rather, it demands that all scholars always recognize truth as truth and falsehood as false. To a certain extent, the Church has the duty to correct the errors of science, always in light of Revelation. Christ declared that life is sacred; thus, the Church defends the principle of the sanctity of life and corrects certain views, such as those of biologists who claim that abortion or euthanasia are justifiable and not murder. In such cases, the Church defends life because Christ Himself revealed that no one—neither oneself nor another—may take life, for it is not ours to give; it belongs to God alone.

The late Patriarch sought to comprehensively demonstrate and prove that faith does not contradict science; that there is harmony between faith and science; that the Church has always promoted the

development of new sciences, and so on. In short, the Church has always strived to guide the achievements of science toward the benefit of humanity, not its destruction.

In editing "Faith and Science," I have primarily modernized the orthography from fifty-six years ago and replaced certain words that are no longer comprehensible to younger generations. It was also important to present Patriarch Josyf's work to today's youth in a language and style accessible to them, so that—despite the fifty-year gap in modes of thought—they might receive a clear answer to the question: Does faith truly contradict science? They will learn that faith does not contradict science! They will discover that through science, one can indeed attain God!

Fr. Evhen Nebesniak

1. Introduction

Two wings by which the human spirit soars into boundless expanse are faith and science. From the dawn of human history, they have guided humanity through the ages as inseparable companions, perfecting its knowledge, morality, and life's demands. It was only with the Renaissance humanism, captivated by ancient pagan literature and art, that a disdainful attitude toward Christian faith began to emerge. From that point onward, there has been an increasing effort to sever faith from science, even to the point of provoking hostility between them.

Luther's Reformation, the French Revolution, materialism, and the atheism of the 20th century mark the major stages in the struggle for the so-called autonomy of human reason. Luther proclaimed the principle that everyone has the right to judge what is true or false in matters of faith, thereby rejecting the authority of the Church. The liberalism of the French Revolution sought to free man from divine influence in all spheres, while materialism refused to acknowledge anything beyond matter.

This struggle divided humanity into two hostile camps—not merely into two irreconcilable theoretical positions held by scholars, but into a conflict whose resolution has shaped entire societies and state systems, often inciting satanic hatred against believing Christians, as seen in the USSR, Mexico, and Spain. Goethe aptly observed in his West-Eastern Divan that the proper, singular, and deepest subject of world history and humanity—subordinate to all other questions—is the conflict between faith and unbelief. Indeed, the relationship between faith and science is the central and most pressing issue.

Thus, the question arises: Can faith and science be reconciled?

Since the 19th century, the triumphant answer has been: "Science and faith do not contradict each other like light and darkness!" It is no wonder, then, that even well-meaning believing Christians may doubt whether, in the face of such a division, they can remain both faithful and dedicated to science. Will they fall into a prolonged spiritual conflict because their Christian religion might forbid them from acknowledging as true what science has discovered? Will they face ridicule and compromise?

To understand the supposed incompatibility—or even irreconcilability—of faith and science, let us examine them more closely and first clarify their definitions.

2. Fundamental Concepts of Faith and Science

When an educated person hears the terms "Christian faith" or "Catholic faith," they often assume that these refer to religious theses proclaimed by the Pope, bishops, and priests—statements that must be accepted uncritically as truth, without proof, solely on the authority of the clergy. If this were indeed the case, it would be a pitiful state for the believing Catholic, and for the Christian in general.

To believe, in the general human sense, means to accept as true that which is based on the testimony of others. When an acquaintance tells me about America—its buildings, and so forth—I consider his account true because he is the one telling me. Furthermore, other people who return from there confirm it. I have not seen skyscrapers, but everyone who returns from New York speaks of them and brings back photographs. I know from experience that my acquaintance is trustworthy and thus tells the truth. My conviction ultimately rests on knowledge. I believe him because I know from experience that he is a reliable witness. While it is not evident to reason that his account corresponds to reality (for, after all, he could have fabricated the story from the photographs), the will prompts reason to consent, asking: How can one reasonably doubt and not accept this as true? This is human faith, encountered at every turn. It is the primary source of human knowledge; in fact, every science relies on faith, for one accepts the findings of others as true without verifying them. When I observe

the world around me, I am convinced that every thing has a cause for its existence; nothing happens without sufficient reason. From this, I infer that the entire world must have some cause. I see that there is motion, yet matter, left to itself, tends toward inertness—thus, someone must have set it in motion. This cause must be intelligent, for the world is governed by great order, beauty, purpose, and harmony. All people are convinced that such a transcendent being exists, and they call it God.

Thus, God exists. History also confirms that God revealed Himself to Moses and the prophets, imparting new truths to them so that they might convey these to humanity. For a fuller instruction, He promised to send the Messiah—Christ, who was indeed born in Bethlehem, lived, taught the people, and died. He confirmed His teachings through miracles and His death, and He demands that every person accept these as true. All of this can be affirmed through rational and historical evidence.

Faced with this, I am left with no choice but to accept the Revelation and regard it as true. Yet it speaks of truths that reason cannot fully comprehend: that there is one God in three Persons; that Christ, in one Person, has both a human and divine nature; that there are seven Sacraments, original sin, and so on. Here, the will intervenes: Acknowledge this as true, for it is the Almighty and Infallible God who speaks. He is Truth itself and cannot lead you into error or deception. Thus, reason accepts the entire Revelation as true.

Catholic faith, as the Council of the Vatican states, is based on the acceptance as absolute truth of what God has revealed—and only because He has revealed it, not because reason has comprehended it (Hebrews 11:6–7). Therefore, faith is not a blind, uncritical assumption, but a profound conviction of reason regarding the truth of what is presented for belief, based on the infallible testimony of God. The will impels reason to accept this as true.

However, it must be emphasized that the act of faith presupposes rational knowledge of God, His existence, Revelation, and the obligation to believe in the Revelation. Yet this rational act does not constitute faith itself. In theology, this is called the preambula fidei—the preambles of faith. In different people, these preliminary convictions vary—some are more childlike, others more fundamental or scientific. In children, they rely on the authority of parents ("because Father and Mother say so"). In the mature, they are based on rational arguments, and in the educated, on scientific foundations. Yet the act of faith itself is the same in all—whether uneducated or educated. Its essential characteristics are as follows:

Non-evidence (Mystery): God has not revealed the internal truth of the mysteries of faith (e.g., how three Persons can exist in one Nature, or how Christ is present under the appearances of bread and wine), but only the object of faith. While some revealed truths can be known through natural reason (e.g., the existence of God, Divine Providence, reward for good and punishment for evil), in such cases, the act is one of reason, not faith. One cannot, in the same act and under the same aspect, both know and believe—for example, both know and believe that God exists.

Freedom: The act of faith is a free act. Reason is not free when it sees the truth of a matter directly (e.g., $2 + 2 = 4$). Once it recognizes that a thing is true, it necessarily gives its assent. In the act of faith, there is no evidence; thus, reason is not compelled to accept the revealed truth as true. Only the will freely inclines reason to do so, and it does so because it is the Infallible God who speaks. The will, however, may refuse to impel reason and reject the proposal. This is the very merit of faith: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Additionally, for the act of faith to be elicited, a good will is required—that is, the will must not influence reason with prejudices but must incline it toward acceptance of the Revelation. Experience confirms that passions—love, hatred—can

influence our thinking, both for good and for ill. Thus, the will can spur reason to deeper reflection or deter it from such labor. This is also why one cannot expect an unbiased judgment from a prejudiced person, nor the elicitation of the act of faith from a distrustful one.

Infallible Truth: The object of faith is the infallible truth—the entire Revelation, that is, all that God has revealed. There can be no shadow of falsehood in the Revelation, for God is the wisest and all-knowing Being. Thus, one cannot accept one truth (e.g., that God exists, that Christ was God) while rejecting others (e.g., miracles, mysteries). To reject even one truth is to deny the infallible authority of God.

It does not follow that every Christian must know all the revealed truths of faith to be saved. What is necessary is to believe that God exists and that He rewards good and punishes evil. Other truths of faith must be believed implicitly (implicite). The more educated one is in matters of faith, the more truths one knows. The demands of the times may also require a deeper knowledge of certain truths of faith. Those who read many books opposed to the faith must also have a more profound knowledge of the truths of faith; otherwise, they will not maintain spiritual equilibrium and may fall into unbelief.

Certainty: The act of faith is certain (Galatians 1:8; Luke 21:33). When I accept as certain that which I have learned from a truthful witness, the certainty is incomparably greater when God Himself vouches for the truth. Yet this certainty can be lost if the will turns away.

Supernatural Grace: Finally, faith is an act of reason and will, perfected by the help of divine grace. Through the act of faith, we turn to God as our eternal reward, and for this, supernatural assistance is required.

Since Revelation is given by God for all nations and generations—and they must receive it uncorrupted and unaltered by arbitrary interpretations—Christ established the Church. With the help of the Holy Spirit, She preserves the entire depositum fidei (deposit of faith). The Church does not preserve the faith as a dead treasure, but as a living principle of a higher world of truths and moral laws. As the teacher of nations, She keeps a watchful eye on their needs, the progress of science and culture, and guides their lives and development with the supernatural foundations of faith.

The Church cannot invent new truths of faith or proclaim one truth today and its opposite tomorrow, for behind Her stands the infallible authority of God, which cannot present falsehood as truth.

It is another matter when it comes to the understanding of the already revealed truths. In this, the Church can—and in fact does—progress. Not all truths are equally clearly revealed. Thus, over time and after lengthy theological inquiries, the Church comes to understand certain truths of faith that are already contained in the Revelation (e.g., the infallibility of the Pope, the Immaculate Conception).

The competence of the Church extends exclusively to Revelation. Thus, the Church has the right to prohibit books that contradict the faith or undermine morality, to condemn heresies, and so on. In the realm of natural truths that do not pertain to faith, the Church cannot decide, and it would be absurd to fear that the Church might one day declare that a geometric theorem of Pythagoras is false, that $2 + 2 = 5$, that the sum of the angles in a triangle is not 180 degrees, or that new physical experiments do not correspond to reality. These matters fall within the competence of science, which we now wish to discuss.

Scientific knowledge begins with perceptions. We accept them through the senses, but we also verify them with a special power—reason. When I look at a stick partially submerged in water, I see that it

appears bent. When I pull it out, I realize it was an illusion. Knowledge is nothing other than the reproduction of reality, which exists outside the human mind. Science goes further: it attains certain, doubt-free knowledge—that is, a judgment about a subject and its phenomena, including knowledge of their causes. In doing so, the sum of knowledge must be systematic. Only when knowledge is systematically organized, certain, and homogeneous regarding a particular thing—and includes knowledge of its causes—do we call it science. Such a sum of knowledge and research into the realm of nature, including the consideration of causes, we call the natural sciences. The collection of knowledge and research into human social life, based on sources and approached pragmatically, genetically, and chronologically, constitutes the science of history, and so on.

The mere assertion and description of a fact are not yet scientific knowledge. Only the investigation of connections, causes, and effects of actions constitutes scientific knowledge. For bread to rise, yeast must be added to the flour—this is known to every peasant woman. The answer to why and how the fungus transforms the dough is scientific knowledge. That a certain poison kills a person is a known fact, but science provides the answer as to why.

Scientific truths must, of course, have universal significance—they must not hold true only in a single case. The angles in a triangle must always and everywhere sum to 180 degrees, and 2 + 2 will always equal 4. Thus, although science begins with experience and individual, concrete cases, it forms general concepts and operates with them. How the mind forms general concepts is not yet fully explained. The inherent natural property of reason is the ability to abstract characteristics, combine them, and arrive at concepts. Analogously, one might ask why a chick immediately begins pecking at grain. This is an instinct in its nature.

Ultimately, the question of concept formation is connected to another question for which there is no satisfactory answer: How does reason receive impressions from the senses—hearing, sight, touch, smell, etc.? Christian philosophy states that just as all things are an imprint of divine ideas, so too is reason a reflection of the divine mind. Therefore, all people have the same abilities and form more or less the same concepts and principles, which become the common heritage of all humanity. On this basis, even the oldest generations can understand the youngest.

Furthermore, scientific knowledge must be true—that is, it must correspond to reality. The conformity between the object and knowledge is called truth. For example: Saint Volodymyr baptized Rus'. A scientist does not create the object of study; the astronomer does not create the stars, the geologist the earth, the physicist matter, and so on—they find these objects before them. One science differs from another by its subject matter (e.g., history vs. physics) and the perspective from which it examines the subject (e.g., history, anthropology, psychology). Science encompasses all areas of experience (observation, experimentation), history, and philosophy—everything that reason can know.

In addition to certain and true knowledge, science also encompasses hypotheses, probable assumptions, and auxiliary means by which it arrives at certain knowledge and truth. Science is not identical to truth, but truth is its goal. It is not something self-sufficient, a superhuman genius who has opened the book of truth—as it is sometimes personified—but rather the work of a limited and dependent human reason, subject to errors and incompleteness, influenced by conditions, passions, and capacities. Even the greatest geniuses have been most aware of this. Aristotle said that our reason relates to divine knowledge as the eye of an owl to sunlight. Newton, in the twilight of his life, compared his scientific achievements to a child who, on the shore of the sea, has found a more beautiful shell than others, yet the entire boundless ocean remains unknown to him. If science progresses with such difficulty in empirical fields, it is even harder in areas beyond the senses.

Finally, it must be added that just as science is subject to truth, so too is it subject to God, its Creator. And just as the whole person depends on God, so too does science, in all its actions, in scientific and cultural life. Therefore, man cannot ignore God in scientific research, and if God exists and has given Revelation, then the scientist must also recognize Him. With this final conclusion, we arrive at the very core of the question we hinted at in the Introduction: Is such a position compatible with serious scientific research? In other words, Can one be both a devout Catholic Christian and a respected scientist? Can there truly be a contradiction between science and faith that cannot be resolved, even with the best of intentions?

3. Can There Be a Contradiction Between Faith and Science?

Those who rush to answer this question can be divided into three groups. The first group answers affirmatively, the second hesitantly, and the third categorically denies the possibility of a genuine conflict.

Atheists and materialists, who deny the existence of God and refuse to acknowledge anything beyond matter or energy, consistently reject all religion or view it as an outdated superstition. In their view, faith—as history supposedly shows—has always been the enemy of research, freedom of science, and progress. On the contrary, science has a duty to examine all questions, including those of faith, and cannot turn a blind eye to its dogmas and presented facts, which clearly contradict science. If one also considers that faith has hindered scientific findings and restricted the freedom of science, then there can be no talk of harmony, let alone cooperation. Faith, by its very nature, is immutable and unchanging, while science, by its nature, is progressive; thus, they had to part ways, as it became impossible to conceal this. Divine Revelation cannot tolerate any opposition; it must, in principle, reject all progress.

Thus, a believer and a scientist cannot coexist in the same person.

Kant and numerous Protestants, along with modernists (whom the Averroists of the Middle Ages foreshadowed), take a different approach. They argue that faith and science are two different things. Their spheres of activity are distinct, and thus there can be no contradiction between them. Faith pertains to feelings, inner needs, and the desires of the heart—a longing for something intangible, something that reason cannot grasp: the irrational realm. Man feels his weaknesses and dependence. This feeling gives rise to a desire to turn to some omnipotent being, and this thought strengthens him. Thus, the existence of God is a necessary conclusion. Science, on the other hand, encompasses the realm of reason. Faith and science move in completely opposite directions and thus do not contradict each other. And if the same thing falls within the scope of both faith and science, then there is nothing to prevent science, according to its demands, from denying it, while faith, according to its own, accepts it: God exists, God does not exist; matter is created, matter is eternal.

Neither the first nor the second view satisfies us. The first is superficial; the second is outright cynical. The existence of God has not been scientifically refuted, so one cannot dismiss faith or consider it an outdated superstition. On the contrary, before our very eyes, it is growing, and even the most educated minds are drawn to it. Furthermore, if someone accepts that the same thing can be both true and false, what becomes of the principle of non-contradiction? How can a sound-thinking person suppose that the same thing, under the same aspect, can simultaneously exist and not exist? Faith is not merely a feeling but a rational conviction.

The Catholic perspective offers a third resolution. It asserts that there cannot be a contradiction between faith and science. Science and faith are indeed two modes of knowledge. In science, reason is active; in faith, reason is also active, but illuminated by supernatural Revelation.

In science, reason arrives at mediate or immediate evidence; in faith, it arrives at the point where reason is convinced that God has revealed this—that is, at the authority of God. The subject of science is natural truths; the subject of faith is revealed mysteries. Thus, there is neither identity nor mixing between faith and science. A contradiction could only arise if faith denied reason's right to seek truth, reject error, correct mistakes, accept the principle of sufficient reason, and so on. But faith stands precisely on the position that it employs reason and upholds these principles.

A contradiction could also arise from the side of reason if, by its very nature, it were compelled to deny faith. But there is no such necessity. Faith demands that reason submit to God, and this is entirely reasonable—just as pride and arrogance are unreasonable. Just as it is not demeaning to trust a man, so too it cannot violate human dignity to trust God when there is evidence of His existence.

Let us examine the above arguments more closely and fundamentally:

a) Can there be a contradiction between faith and reason with regard to God as their common source?

God gave man reason to attain knowledge of the truth. However, given the limited powers of reason, the same God revealed supernatural truths that man could never attain through his own powers alone. Both the natural knowledge attained by reason and the supernatural complement of natural truths—which man accepts by faith—originate from God. He cannot contradict Himself or deny Himself. If, in giving man the ability to know a truth through reason, He simultaneously denied it in Revelation, there would indeed be a contradiction between faith and science. But such a God would be strange and malevolent.

Furthermore, God is the wisest being, and for Him, there is no difference between the natural and the supernatural. The duality of truths exists only in man's understanding and solely from the perspective of his finite, limited nature and conditional capacity. Objectively speaking, in God's understanding, there are no natural or supernatural truths—no natural or supernatural knowledge—only one truth and one act of knowledge. An example may clarify this.

From an elevated position on Earth, a person can see a certain part of the planet's surface. From an airplane, they can see much more. Both parts, objectively speaking, form a single whole. The difference arises only from the perspective of elevation. Consequently, there can be no contradiction in their knowledge. Similarly, when I look at the night sky, with the naked eye I see millions of stars. But if I use a powerful telescope, I see that there are many more. The second knowledge does not contradict the first.

From God's perspective, He equally knows and sees all truths. Thus, as I have said, there can be no contradiction in His act of knowledge, nor can there be a contradiction when He reveals this truth to man. Similarly, the twofold knowledge cannot produce a contradiction, for through faith, reason knows more and better—not the opposite—than it does through reasoning. Thus, there is no reason to claim that what reason certainly knows through its own powers contradicts Revelation.

b) The subject of knowledge and metaphysical proof.

To know the truth, one can use various means and arrive at it through different paths. Truth is connected to being and is its inseparable attribute. Everything that exists is true, and under the same aspect, something cannot simultaneously be and not be. Thus, it also cannot be both true and false at the same time. For example: This man is alive. It cannot simultaneously be true and false that he is alive, just as he cannot be both alive and dead at the same time. Since ontological truth is one, so too is logical truth—that is, the conformity between our knowledge and the object—can only be one. For either our knowledge corresponds to reality or it does not, and thus our judgment is either true or false.

c) That such conclusions are indeed true is also evidenced by life experience.

How many believing scientists have there been—and among the most prominent and founders of new sciences! In past centuries, almost all were believers; they accepted the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Let us recall just a few of the great scientists: Newton, Copernicus, Galileo, Leibniz... Is this not clear proof that science was not and is not atheistic, and that faith and science can be reconciled? The physicist Lord Kelvin wrote: "Science positively affirms that there is a creative force—a force that governs all, a special influence beyond physical, dynamic, and chemical forces. Do not fear to be free thinkers. When you reflect more deeply, science will compel you to believe in God, who is the foundation of all religion. You will see that science is not the enemy but the helper of religion."

d) Finally, the impossibility of a contradiction between science and faith follows from the similarity between scientific knowledge and the act of faith.

This is also why scientists have not found it difficult to believe. Faith presupposes knowledge of God and the fact of Revelation. Thus, the act of faith also includes an act of philosophical-historical knowledge. Furthermore, the act of faith itself has an analogy in science, which accepts truths based on the testimony of others. How much in science is taken as true simply because others report it! Even specialists base much of their knowledge on faith, accepting others' observations, findings, and conclusions. Additionally, just as faith has its mysteries, so too does science face numerous enigmas before which it stands helpless. Thus, there is a great similarity between the process of the act of faith and that of scientific knowledge.

However, one might object to these conclusions—not without some justification—that history has indeed seen conflicts between faith and science. To this, we can immediately respond that these conflicts were only apparent. First, many sciences and faith have no common ground on which a dispute could arise. And if a contradiction does arise between faith and a science that deals with the same questions and subjects, then an error has been made somewhere. Either the natural knowledge is not certain and true, or the second, in the realm of the supernatural, is not revealed but is the personal opinion of individuals. In such a case, a fundamental verification must be undertaken. Let us consider a few examples.

Theologians once accepted that the Flood covered the entire Earth and all of humanity. More thorough research has shown—and natural sciences confirm—that Sacred Scripture does not speak of a universal (geographically speaking) flood. Nor is there absolute certainty in Scripture from an anthropological perspective.

Similarly, theories about the origin of the inorganic and organic worlds can be reconciled with Revelation. The view and assertion that God created the primordial matter with its inherent properties and left it to natural development—rather than directly forming the sun, Earth, moon, etc., one after

another—can also be applied to the organic world. After all, St. Augustine himself posited the hypothesis that the first chapter of Genesis should not be taken literally.

And what of Galileo? He was condemned by the Congregation with the Pope's knowledge for accepting the rotation of the Earth and rejecting Ptolemy's system. However, the Church did not condemn him as an infallible authority, for the Congregation does not possess the gift of infallibility. Thus, there was no contradiction between faith and science, but rather—as often happens—a conflict between a scientist and secular authority, between scholars and bishops.

Many apparent misunderstandings arise from a direct ignorance of faith or theology. Some philosophers consider the Most Holy Trinity a contradiction, like a square circle. Clearly, they have no understanding of profound speculation, just as a layman might mock calculus and differential equations. The Most Holy Trinity is not the assertion that 1 = 3, for the divine Persons are distinct in terms of personhood but one in nature.

The Sacraments are magical signs that force a person, whether they want to or not—so the accusation goes. In reality, they are instruments, signs through which God bestows grace upon man. Man can use them or not, without physical coercion. In the Most Holy Eucharist, Christ is truly, really, and substantially present, but not in the way material things exist in space—only spiritually. God's action through grace does not violate the freedom of the will. All theologians teach this, despite differences in schools of thought.

The books of the Old and New Testaments are inspired by the Holy Spirit in all their parts, even those that speak of worldly matters—that is, they cannot contain errors. However, they are not scientific treatises but religious and moral teachings that use the popular expressions of their time, just as we do today with scientific terms.

The infallibility of the Pope is not the same as his omniscience or sinlessness. The Pope is infallible only when he proclaims truths of faith and morals. The veneration of images is not the veneration of objects but of the persons they depict. Honoring the saints is the exaltation of their holiness and intercession before God.

Thus, Tertullian aptly noted that the Church desires nothing more than that She not be condemned before She is properly understood. And Marshal Foch said that faith has no enemy in science, but in ignorance.

Science denies many truths, but it does not prove them. One philosopher denies the existence of God and the soul, creation, and so on, while another accepts them. Thus, the assertions of the first are not absolutely certain. Some thinkers reach such extreme skepticism that they even speak of the pathology of human thought. Clearly, there can be no agreement between faith and such "sciences."

Let us consider a few more examples of apparent differences between faith and the natural sciences. The most popular objection is the improbability of miracles. Some professors declared before the war: "Gentlemen, no reasonable man believes in miracles today." The best way to be convinced otherwise is to visit Lourdes, where all cases are conscientiously verified. For those who accept the existence of God, there is no obstacle to accepting miracles. And science has not proven—and cannot prove—that God does not exist. The arguments for God's existence are based on the principles of causality and the objectivity of human knowledge, as well as on the nature of man—and science cannot change this unless it changes the nature of man and the universe.

Among the unproven "desiderata" of science is the eternity of matter. Atheists accept this as a necessity, even though there is no proof—except that otherwise, one would logically have to arrive at a Creator. There is also no proof that life on Earth originated from matter. Biologists once firmly asserted: Omne vivum ex vivo (all life comes from life). Ultimately, even if it were proven that life originated from matter, this would not deny God, for He could have given matter such properties that life would emerge from it. However, the question of whether this is how it happened remains open.

A related question is the hypothesis of evolution. An evolutionist who accepts the existence of God does not oppose faith. The matter is more serious with the Darwinist assertion of the evolution of man from lower animals. However, the scientific certainty of evolution in its entirety is far from established. On the contrary, even before the World War, the science of biology fundamentally defended the theory of evolution—especially after Gregor Mendel proved that the nature of created beings tends toward the preservation of their species, not evolution. The contemporary greatest American physicist, Nobel laureate Robert A. Millikan, states that evolution existed, but in the mind of God, who created the greatest sum of existences. Based on various studies, it has been proven that all known bones of "anthroposes" (for some scientists divided humanity into "anthroposes" and "homo") belong to fully developed humans. There are no intermediate forms between apes and humans.

Similarly, if we consider the question of the unity of the human race, there is no proof against it. Racial differences are insufficient to support the idea of multiple origins of the human race. The antiquity of humanity has never been the subject of dogmatic definition. Sacred Scripture does not provide a direct answer to this. While there are some foundations in the number of generations listed in the Bible, the genealogy is not complete. Likewise, the age of the human race, as proposed by paleontologists—reaching millions of years—is also merely a hypothesis. I recall from my gymnasium days the impression it made on the entire class when a professor brought in an image of primitive man, as if it were a strong argument against faith. In reality, this does not contradict the Bible at all, for Adam, expelled from Paradise, lived the life of a primitive man, with primitive means and amid the threats of nature and danger from wild beasts.

Some scientists once thought that the end of the world, when stars would fall to Earth, was a fable of Scripture. Today, the possibility of Earth colliding with comets and other planets is accepted in astronomy as highly probable. In general, in the 18th century, scientists refused to believe that meteorites could fall to Earth. They were removed from museums to avoid ridicule. When a meteorite fell near Zagreb in 1751, Professor Stütz of Vienna said in 1790: "That iron falls from the sky could once be believed. But in our times, it would be inexcusable to consider such tales plausible." In 1790, a meteorite fell in Juillac, and the mayor sent a report to the Academy in Paris, signed by 300 witnesses. The reviewer, Bertholon, said that one could sympathize with such a community for having such a mayor and that this was an impossible phenomenon.

Here is another example from the literature of the early Christians. How many hypotheses have been devised regarding the Gospels—that they are legends, that Christianity is a further development of pagan mysteries, and so on. One theory after another, each refuting the previous, each contradicting the next. I myself had to spend an entire year studying, while writing my doctoral dissertation, just to orient myself in this chaos. Protestant rationalists of the last century even considered the entire early Christian literature—including the New Testament—to be late forgeries and fabrications. However, they later had to admit, through the words of Adolf von Harnack, that the time had long passed when early Christian literature, including the New Testament, was considered a forged patchwork and deception.

And if research leads faith and science to the same truth, then for them it is the same truth. The moment reason recognizes the truth, it must accept it and cannot accept anything contrary. Man is not the creator of truth nor its source. Such is God—"Theos metron panton" (God is the measure of all things), as Plato says. Man strives to know the truth and accepts it from without. The Church, if the same truth is also revealed, presents it for belief on the basis of God's infallible authority—and in this, She cannot err. By two different paths, faith and science arrive at the same conclusion.

If faith presents a truth that reason cannot attain through natural means, reason must accept it, for God has the right to demand that what He has revealed be accepted as true. Such dependence on faith does not detract from the honor of science. It does not contradict truth and thus does not deviate from its goal of knowing the truth. Therefore, Paulsen was wrong when he wrote that submitting to what the Church taught, teaches, and will teach involves the resolution to consider as true what appears false to the uncorrupted reason after unbiased research—or to renounce serious research as soon as the Church issues a decision on philosophical and theological views. Reason, even in matters of faith, does not renounce research, for it must know that God exists and that He Himself has revealed this truth.

Thus, genuine scientific research does not oppose faith, for it cannot do so for the above reasons. The goal of science is to know the truth. Revelation does not turn science away from truth but, as stated earlier, reveals new truths. The certainty of supernatural truths is greater than that of natural truths, for they are revealed by the Infallible God, not by fallible man. Therefore, science and faith not only cannot contradict each other but, on the contrary, their peaceful cooperation and mutual assistance are to their mutual benefit.

Philosophy helps faith by providing rational foundations for revealed truths, understanding their meaning, and drawing further conclusions. Otherwise, without rational knowledge, faith would become mere sentiment. Thus, every theologian is also a philosopher. Faith, in turn, protects science from errors. A classic example is Pasteur's response when a student asked how, after so much scientific work, he could still be a believer. Pasteur replied: "Precisely because of so much reflection and research, I have retained the faith of a good Breton (known for their deep religiosity in France), and if I had studied even more, I would have arrived at the faith of a Breton woman."

4. Faith and the Freedom of Science

While acknowledging the harmony of truth between faith and science in knowledge, one might still object that the Church has hindered the development of science. Being more conservative, it clung to old views and even forbade the propagation of new ideas. Its dogmas also bind scientific research. Renan stated that a believing man cannot be a researcher, for he already knows his conclusions in advance... that science worthy of the name is possible only under the condition of complete autonomy. Similarly, Henri Poincaré considered freedom as essential to science as air is to an animal. Deprived of freedom, it dies of suffocation. This freedom must be unbounded. Thought can never be subject to dogma, party, passion, interest, prejudice, or any other thing. Freedom is a sweet word. Nations fight for it, men shed blood for it, and science cannot allow it to be torn away.

Before the war, the freedom of science was a rallying cry among liberal scholars, especially when they wanted to reproach the Church. Today, after the experiences of war, Bolshevik oppression of science, and Hitler's imperatives, the matter has quieted down. For what was the Church's restriction of scientific freedom compared to today's tyranny? It often seemed almost laughable how they protested against the enslavement of science by faith—especially in fields like technology, mathematics, and

geography, which have no connection to faith in their research. Yet today, alas, the majority of scholars remain silent as Bolsheviks demand a Bolshevik orientation even from mathematics, and only a few have spoken out against such treatment of science. But "comparison is not reason." Just because we reproach certain modern regimes for oppressing science does not absolve the Church of the same accusation. So let us examine this reproach, which, as mentioned, became very popular in the 19th century. After all, a true scientific researcher must be free from everything that restricts or hinders his scientific work.

First, it must be noted that the freedom of science is not equivalent to licentiousness, absolute independence, or reckless freedom from all laws. As everywhere, so too in science, freedom is permissible only within certain limits. For every scientist is bound by the rules of logic, fundamental principles, scientific methods, materials, means, and so on. He cannot reverse centuries, mix events, or turn immoral scoundrels into luminaries. In short, the man of science becomes a slave to truth, and such a restriction of freedom must be accepted by all.

The freedom of science lies solely in the fact that it proceeds from its own principles and employs its own methods. Science begins with evident axioms or observed facts. Freedom also lies in liberation from unjust external restrictions that hinder the search for truth. Such restrictions can be external factors—authorities that forbid the investigation of certain questions, the use of old methods, or the search for new ones that lead to the knowledge of truth; that do not allow the recognition of true findings or the use of others' research. Thus, science must be free from external, unjustified factors—whether from the state, party, protectionism, servitude, or, to the same extent, the Church—if it is to achieve its goal. Before truth, all opportunistic and selfish considerations must step aside. However, there are also justified restrictions from external factors. I do not mean that a scientist is bound by cultural behavior and respect for the rights of others. He is not free to walk on roofs, disturb others, or suffocate others with gases simply because he is a scientist conducting experiments. But even in the experiments themselves, the scientist is bound by external authority. If other scientists have established a truth, successors are compelled to accept it, for otherwise, everyone would have to start from the beginning, and no progress would be made. Hence the principle: "Auctoritas valet tantum, quantum argumenta" (Authority is worth as much as the arguments).

The more a scientist knows the achievements of others, the more dependent he is; the less he knows, the freer he is—but, unfortunately, also more prone to errors. However, this is not the ideal. Similarly, the more cultured a man is, the more bound he is. Conversely, where there are fewer restrictions and dependencies, the closer one is to a primitive state. Every cultured man is bound by rules and laws, but this does not mean he is in a worse position than a primitive Brazilian, African, or Australian. Every free citizen must be free from tyranny, but not from civic duties. In social life, he must subordinate himself to the common good, but in doing so, he does not destroy himself—instead, he elevates and develops himself.

Similarly, an artist is bound by the rules of beauty, technique, and the achievements of his predecessors. From the freedom of research must be distinguished the freedom of teaching, regarding which there can be much greater and justified reservations. Teaching involves the dissemination of principles that can often disturb public peace and incite rebellion—such as the spread of monarchist ideas in a republican state, or vice versa, or generally anarchist ideas. Thus, authority may prohibit this.

Therefore, if it is permissible to restrict the freedom of science by human authority, how much more so by divine authority! For natural reason proves that God exists and has given revealed truths. Science must acknowledge this and take it into account, for no one is obligated—and indeed cannot—accept

only errors. Someone might say that in such a case, science no longer has anything to research, even regarding truths known from Revelation. For example, if God exists, this is certain from Revelation, so philosophy has nothing more to say. However, this is not the case. Philosophy must, by its own means, arrive at the proof of this truth. It is not at all contrary to science if it further confirms an already proven thesis with new proofs. Thus, I can logically prove a truth known from faith, abstracting from the fact that it is revealed. If a researcher arrives at a different conclusion, it is a sign that he has made a mistake somewhere and must conduct a review.

The truths of faith are only a negative norm for science. Revelation is for science neither a source nor a proof, but merely an indication that certain truths cannot be disputed. Geology would not be geology, mathematics mathematics, physics physics, etc., if they began to prove their theses from Revelation and theology. For them, Revelation is only a foundation and a result—that they accept as their basis and prove by their own principles and methods. Yet they still cannot trespass into areas outside their domain, denying the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Sacraments, etc., for in doing so, they exceed their competence. Faith does not dictate what science must teach, nor does it demand that secular science prove and accept as its own truth the revealed truths that it cannot decisively prove by its own means—for example, that the first man was named Adam. Thus, it would be more ridiculous than reproachful if, as Professor Jodl once said, "the Church will one day task a physicist in the age of Zeppelins to prove the Ascension of Christ and Mary into heaven based on his aeronautical views."

The Church's duty is solely to preserve Revelation, and thus faith can be a negative guide for science only with regard to what is revealed—what pertains to religion and morality—and thus does not equally affect all sciences. Therefore, not all sciences can have points of contact with the truths of faith in their research. There are sciences—such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, philology, pharmacy, etc.—that have no connection to faith. Ethnology, biology, geology, and philosophy, on the other hand, have common points with Revelation, and a dispute may arise if any of them transgress the boundaries of metaphysics and begin to draw conclusions that go beyond the limits of their experience.

Finally, there is a third category of sciences that deal with the same subject as theology, but from a different perspective—such as philosophy and history. Indeed, the narration of facts is not Catholic or non-Catholic, but true or false. However, philosophical and religious foundations play a significant role here, from which the historian proceeds, illuminates events, and pragmatically arranges them. If a historian does not believe in God, does not acknowledge Christ, the Church, miracles, or moral laws, his history will naturally look different from that of a believing researcher. Thus, while we do not speak of Catholic mathematics, geology, etc., there is such a thing as Catholic history.

The same applies to philosophy, for it shares many common points with faith in the realms of worldview, metaphysics, and ethics—which are the most difficult questions. It is no wonder that in these fields, science has made the least progress and accumulated the most errors. Thus, the negative guidance of faith is most necessary for philosophy. A German philosopher aptly observed: "If the greatest German naturalists, doctors, and geographers were to rise from their graves, they would be amazed at the progress of their sciences. They would sit like students at the feet of today's teachers, lacking the basic concepts known to every beginner. Much of what they once considered certain facts would now appear to them as illusions or mere hypotheses. However, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus could still today—without preparation—take part in philosophical debates about God, the soul, virtue, and immortality. They could confidently use the old weapons, which, compared to their former sharpness, have only slightly dulled from rust and hostile skill. They would marvel only at the

small extent to which, after 2,000 years, the same questions still receive almost the same opposing answers."

Faith does not restrict the freedom of science any more than a reviewer restricts the freedom of an author. The reviewer corrects the author's errors, just as one science corrects another, and no one sees this as any form of enslavement. Similarly, when faith corrects science, it is not a restriction of freedom. It is no restriction of a tourist's freedom if he sees colorful road signs or warnings before abysses, or for a ship, the light of a lighthouse warning of rocks and shallows. Otherwise, there would often be "great strides off the path," as St. Augustine says. By showing its boundaries, faith warns science not to crash, and in doing so, it also aids science. The believer finds support in faith, not an obstacle. Keeping the Eighth Commandment in mind, the believing scientist will always consider truth as truth and falsehood as false. A religiously educated scientist will more readily master his passions and inclinations than a non-religious one and will consider it his duty of conscience to approach objectivity as closely as possible, remembering Christ's words: "And the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

5. The Impartiality of Science and Faith

A second objection to the harmony of faith and science is the demand for impartiality in science. Since the truths of faith already predetermine the findings of science—and do so irrevocably—they thereby bias science in its search for truth. The demand for impartiality in science was raised by liberal circles along with the freedom of science, and the two attributes were inseparably linked. This was particularly evident when the Catholic M. Spahn was to be appointed professor of history at the University of Strasbourg. All Protestant universities in Germany rose in protest, and the old historian Mommsen formulated the following objection in 1901:

"Our vital nerve is unbiased research, which does not seek what it deliberately, intentionally, and with ulterior motives wishes or would like to find—what serves other practical purposes lying outside science—but rather what, logically and historically, appears to the conscientious researcher as correct. That is, truth. The calling of a historian or philosopher who must be either Catholic or Protestant and who must serve this or that confession means to impose limits on his work where the findings might be inconvenient to the confessional dogma... We hope we are not mistaken in believing that we are also expressing the convictions of our colleagues."

It is true that science cannot be biased or make assumptions—but only false ones. In its research, science cannot rely on principles and be guided by rules that it cannot prove in any way. Science also demands only that the researcher not accept as certain what is not certain or is merely an assumption. However, if something is a proven truth, the researcher can accept it, for it can only be helpful, not harmful. Truth cannot oppose truth.

Mommsen had in mind the Catholic scholar. And if his position were true, no Catholic—and indeed no believer—could be a scientific researcher; only an atheist could. A believer accepts the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, supernatural intervention, etc., and from this perspective, illuminates the subject of research. But the atheist is in the same position, proceeding from opposite principles—there is no God, no soul, no afterlife, etc.—and from these, he also illuminates events. "There are no miracles" is an unproven assumption. Thus, he too is biased, and in general, no science can exist, for everyone proceeds from certain assumptions. Almost every science must assume other findings, for otherwise, no progress would be conceivable. Thus, astronomy presupposes mathematics, physics, chemistry, logic, etc., and does not provide proofs for all mathematical, physical,

chemical, and logical truths. A naturalist does not prove that a body exists, that it is heavy, solid, etc., but takes all this as given. Yet no one reproaches him for approaching his research with assumptions and presuppositions.

The historian assumes that ancient monuments convey to us the same concepts and principles of past peoples that we have in our thinking. He does this because otherwise, it would be impossible to understand them at all. The historian, like every researcher, accepts natural certainty.

The philosopher also assumes that a thinking entity exists. To verify correct thinking, one must accept that reason is capable of this and that the principles of causality, sufficient reason, identity, and non-contradiction hold. Otherwise, further conclusions would be impossible.

In social life, there are also various views—monarchism, democracy, nationalism, socialism—from which actors proceed and assume in their actions.

Thus, there is no science without accepted assumptions, principles, and every scientist belongs to some school, system, or declares himself for this or that method, has a worldview from which he evaluates and resolves questions. I am a Ukrainian, and from this position, I write the history of Ukraine. Otherwise, only an uneducated man would have the best qualifications as a scientist. Therefore, there is no science at all without prior assumptions, and there cannot be.

With this in mind, we can now ask: Does the believer, in approaching scientific research, meet scientific demands or not? The answer is clear: Yes, he does. He assumes the truths of faith, which are proven and certain. And what is true and certain can be taken by the scientist as the foundation of his research. Not every Catholic scientist is in the position to rely on Revelation, even as a negative norm. Neither Kepler nor Newton based their proofs on Revelation or assumed it. It is another matter when a historian writes about the Church. He cannot exclude supernatural action, for this contradicts the faith that is based on Revelation and reason. Such an assumption is self-evident, for how can one write about the Church if it does not exist? Or how can one write the history of Ukraine if one does not acknowledge it in any way—neither territorial, nor state, nor national?

It is not difficult to notice that in this argumentation of liberal scholars, there lies a gross tendentiousness.

One can be a monist, materialist, or Hegelian and not be biased—only a Catholic is supposedly unable to avoid bias. The pedagogue Förster aptly observed: "Over the years, I have been able to make interesting observations regarding the incredible bias of many representatives of 'unbiased' research. For them, it is an a priori dogma that everything the Catholic Church defends is stupidity, superstition, and pathology. In general, they cannot conceive that an unbiased man, through concrete experience, unbiased research, and serious reflection, could arrive at this in science, in the field of education, to confirm certain views of the Roman Church as inevitable consequences of any deep knowledge of the soul and life. For them, such recognition is strictly forbidden to non-Catholics; for them, truth must end where the Catholic begins, and they cannot accept anything here, or if they do under a scientific aspect, they will not be taken seriously."

Indeed, being an atheist was once considered de rigueur in science.

Thus, true science cannot oppose faith, and a believing Catholic has every right to engage in serious scientific work. Through his conscientious labors, he deserves only the gratitude of all who hold science dear.

Afterword

By Msgr. Ivan Khoma, Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Rome and long-time Secretary to Patriarch Josyf I (1963–1982)

The work "Faith and Science" was published in 1935 in the journal Dzvony in Lviv. In it, the Author analyzes an age-old yet still hotly debated question: the relationship between faith and science, the conflict between them, and whether a contradiction between them is real or merely a strange misunderstanding.

The work is in the form of an article, written for a literary and social journal, and as such, is intended for a philosophically and theologically informed reader. Although the work employs arguments from previous decades, particularly from classical theodicy, its relevance makes it a valuable contribution to the treatment of this problem. The Author illuminates the image of wholeness and unity in the human search for truth when he states: "Two wings by which the human spirit soars into boundless expanse are faith and science."

Translator's Note

This English edition was produced by J.C. Lysos in 2026. The translation from the original Ukrainian was generated using Mistral Vibe AI, after which J.C. Lysos read through the full text and edited it for accessibility to English-language readers. No major changes were made to the content, structure, or arguments of the original work; edits were limited to word choice and sentence structure to improve readability in English.

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